



MARAD Update



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Texas Maritime Academy Receives New Training Ship



The Next Texas Clipper: USNS Sirius

Photo Courtesy of U.S. Military Sealift Command

The stage was set for a new Texas Maritime Academy training ship when the USNS *Sirius*, a military replenishment ship, arrived in Galveston on July 1.

Upon arrival, title to the USNS *Sirius* officially transferred from the Military Sealift Command to the Maritime Administration (MARAD). In the fall, it will be assigned as a training ship for the Texas Maritime Academy (of the Texas A&M University at Galveston), and renamed the U.S. Training Ship *Texas Clipper*.

"This ship will be an excellent training platform for our cadets, will give the program room to expand, and foster an increased enrollment in the Maritime Corps of Cadets. The *Sirius* will afford opportunities for use beyond cadet training, and will be the flagship of all the maritime academies," said Dr. Bowen Loftin, Vice President and CEO of TAMUG.

The USNS *Sirius* is a combat stores ship built by a firm in Great Britain. It was originally built as a Royal Navy replenishment ship, and commissioned in 1967 as the RFA *Lyness*,

and later acquired by the U.S. Navy because of the increased logistics demands created by maintaining two carrier battle groups in the Indian Ocean during the Iranian hostage crisis.

On January 1, 1981, the USNS *Sirius* was purchased by the U.S. Navy from the British Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and placed into service with the Military Sealift Command.

Sailing under the flag of the Military Sealift Command, it had been used to replenish other military vessels. It provided such supplies as refrigerated stores, dry provisions, technical and aviation spares, general stores, fleet freight, mail, personnel, and other items needed by the U.S. Armed Forces.

The ship is 524 feet long, has a top speed of 18 knots, and displaces about 16,800 tons.

The "new" *Texas Clipper* replaces the former Training Ship *Texas Clipper II*, which had been in service since 1996. The *Texas Clipper II* was returned to MARAD's National Defense Reserve Fleet.

The soon-to-be ex-*Sirius* will be the third Texas Maritime Academy training ship provided by MARAD; the first was also named *Texas Clipper*. That ship, the former American Export Lines combo liner *Excambion*, served as Texas Maritime Academy's first training ship from 1965 to 1994, and is scheduled to be sunk as an artificial reef off the Texas coast in the near future.

Texas A&M University at Galveston hosts one of six state maritime academies in the United States. The Texas Maritime Academy is the only academy on the Gulf Coast.

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